

DRAFT

# **Mount Washington Forest Reserve**

## **Draft Proposal**

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Please send comments on this proposal by November 1, 2005 to:

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## **Overview of Natural Resources within the proposed Mount Washington Forest Reserve:**

The proposed reserve is located in the towns of Egremont, Mount Washington, and Sheffield in the southwest corner of the state - one of the most remote and wild areas in the Commonwealth. This area contains one of the state's densest concentrations of biodiversity and rare species. It is a part of a region (where Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts meet) that is a focal point for the protection of large, unfragmented forests that still exist here. The proposed reserve is made up of Mount Washington State Forest and Mount Everett State Reservation. The Jug End Reservation, a property jointly managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, is not part of the present proposal. Mount Washington State Forest contains 30 miles of trails and offers hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing and cross country skiing. The forest includes Bash Bish Falls, a scenic 80 foot waterfall. Several mountains within these two state properties offer spectacular views of the expansive forest in the three-state region. Mount Everett State Reservation contains a beautiful section of the Appalachian Trail along Sage Brook as well as very old and unique, high elevation forest.

The proposed forest reserve at Mount Washington ranked second in the state behind only Mount Greylock among the 22 potential forest reserves using the biodiversity rating system described above. Because of the high biodiversity value of these two areas, both are being proposed as forest reserves, even though they are both in the same ecological land unit (the only proposed reserves within the same ecological land unit). Utilizing the eleven biodiversity criteria recommended to EOEA by experts outside and within state government, Mount Washington had the highest rating in the state for old growth value and second highest rating for the number of viable rare species communities. Mount Washington was also highly rated for the percentage of forest within ten kilometers of the reserve, the percentage of habitat for certain species of sensitive salamanders, percentage of interior forest, percentage of protected open space within ten kilometers of the reserve, acreage of valley bottom habitat and acreage of large parcels of interior forest.